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Flyover seen for congested point on trail

City needs \$18 million to make bypass a reality

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Editor

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Between the Chicago River's outlet to Lake Michigan and E. Illinois St. and Grand Ave., the lakefront trail turns into something of a vortex — a place where cyclists and pedestrians compete for diminished space on a sidewalk beneath Lake Shore Drive as vehicles head northbound beside them or enter and exit the east-west approach to Navy Pier.

"We just know from our own experience and our members' experiences it is a difficult, at best, place to navigate. It's confusing," said Rob Sadowsky, executive director of the Active Transportation Alliance.

"I think it's probably the most dangerous portion of the lakefront trail right now," said Ken Kosowsky, a manager at Get a Grip Cycles, which operates a shop near Fulton and Halsted and one further north.

A project to bypass this convergence of difficult biking, walking and driving conditions is now in the works.

The Navy Pier Flyover envisions using an estimated \$40 million to develop what's essentially a bridge rising adjacent to upper Lake Shore Drive, cantilevered out to the east of the busy expressway.

The flyover would begin its incline near Oak Street Beach and DuSable Park on the north and south, respectively.

Around \$9 million in federal transportation dollars paid for the initial design phase of the flyover, said Brian Steele, a spokesman for the Chicago Department of Transportation.

More than \$13 million in federal Congestion Management and Air Quality money will flow to the project over the next two years, said Tom Garritano, spokesman for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which operates a committee that vets proposals for federal transportation dollars in northeastern Illinois.

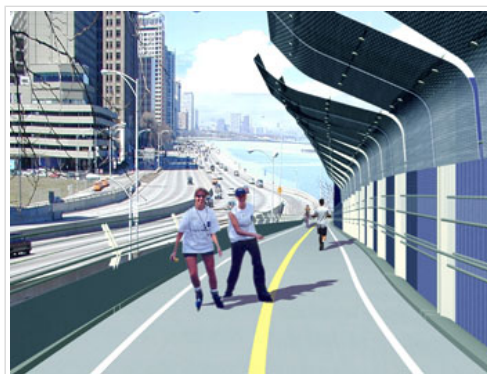
Approximately \$18 million would thus be needed to complete the infrastructure.

"It's somewhat similar to what we did at Solidarity Drive, where we separated bikes and pedestrians from the street," Steele said.

That project saw the city use federal transportation dollars to dip a section of the lakefront path under Solidarity, the east-west access point to Adler Planetarium and Northerly Island, so trail users and vehicles wouldn't be forced into direct contact.

Brian Hopkins, president of the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents, said previous designs for the flyover had struck a compromise between preventing trail users from accessing Lake Point Tower's terraces — the building is located east of part of the proposed flyover — and striking aesthetically pleasing notes.

Hopkins predicted support from the surrounding neighborhood so long as that approach was



The federal government paid for the conceptual designs of the Navy Pier Flyover.
Chicago Department of Transportation

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Sadowsky thought cyclists and pedestrians who use the lakefront trail would greet completion of the flyover rather happily.

“There’s going to be a collective scream of joy when this is done,” he said.

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